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# The Union Monument and Other Poems

BY

STERLING BOISSEAU

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Sterling Boisseau

# THE

# UNION MONUMENT

## AND OTHER POEMS

BY

STERLING BOISSEAU

MANUFACTURED BY
L. H. JENKINS, RICHMOND, VA.

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TO

KITTY, MY WIFE

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS

AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED

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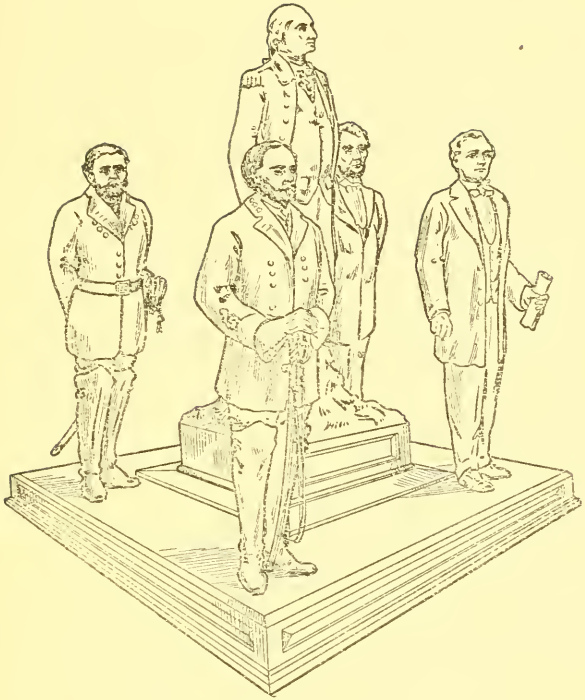


THE UNION MONUMENT

# THE UNION MONUMENT AND OTHER POEMS

## THE UNION MONUMENT.

Are the North and South now united;
  Has the deep yawning chasm been filled;
Are we square the one with the other;
  The strife of our passions been stilled?
Do lips speak the heart's true emotions
  As we talk with and speak of each other;
Are the handshakes the genuine clasping
  That's given by brother to brother?

Are we willing to show we're united
  By a token that's lasting and grand,
A monument surpassing all others
  And on it these characters stand?
Our Washington central in figure,
  Around him four others would be,
Lincoln and Grant there side by side
  As brothers with Davis and Lee?

NOTE.—The writer selects these statesmen and soldiers because they were the leaders of the times they represented. The CAUSE, not the INDIVIDUAL, is what is in mind.

## THE SCAR.

A thorn in the flesh—it crept its stealthy way
Until it lodged right near my throbbing heart,
And there it held its irritating sway;
My very heart-strings tore, 'twas loth to part
Until death's door did seem to be ajar.

At last it on its tortuous way did go
Until it passed my nerve-racked body thro';
Its progress hellish, by its pace so slow,
The agony once passed, 'twas then I knew
That I was free again—but for the scar.

## THE TIME I'VE FRITTERED AWAY.

Rejoice in thy youth, young man, thought I;
I will not yet think of the morrow,
Sufficient the day is the evil thereof,
Then why should I think of its sorrow?
But, time is now fleeting; I sit here to-day
Regretting the time I've frittered away.

I sowed my wild oats of license and sin
Instead of calm zephyrs I reap the whirlwind,

Instead of green pastures all's barren and dead,
Instead of still waters there're breakers ahead;
Yes, time is now fleeting, I sit here to-day
Regretting the time I've frittered away.

I'm weary, cast down, forsaken, alone,
I've come to myself far away from my home,
I will arise, to my Father I'll go,
His pardon I'll ask, oh, may it be so
That He will receive me, forgive me to-day
The time I have wasted and frittered away.

## TO A MASON.

(A Dear Helpful Friend)

Now, can one be a Mason
  Yet work not in brick nor stone,
Neither a member of the Craft
  Of wise King Solomon?
Yes, there is one whose Masonry
  Is work well done in life,
By whose happy marriage tie
  Became a Mason's wife.

## THE OPEN PULPIT.*

The "open pulpit," a step for union take,
Together stand for Christian union's sake,
For those who hold that they are strongly blest.
To them the duty be to help the rest;
Without a union, can we hope to win
In waging war against that union, sin.

* Written during the session of the Protestant Episcopal Convention in Richmond, Va., in 1907, while the "open pulpit" was being considered. The Lord Bishop of London was an attendant.

With me as my lone companion,
Boone, my dog, for so I named him
After Daniel Boone, the hunter;
He would "tree" the nimble squirrel,
Chase the timid white-tail rabbit,
And the music of his "crying"
As he followed hard upon them
Thrilled me; you must be a huntsman
To conceive my soul's delight.

## BOONE, MY DOG COMPANION.

In my youthful thoughts and fancies
As I wandered through the forest
I would dream of Hiawatha
When he, with his bow and arrows,

Hunted for the famous red-deer.
But I had no bow and arrows,
Just a little keen-edged hatchet
Which by whirling at a distance
Sink its blade into a tree-trunk.
Bayonet I sometimes carried
Dropped as were so many others
By some gray or blue-clad soldier
On the Five-Forks battlefield.
There were many mute reminders
Of this bloody civil struggle
Between brothers now united
To be seen along my wandering.

With me as my lone companion,
Boone, my dog, for so I named him
After Daniel Boone, the hunter;
He would "tree" the nimble squirrel,
Chase the timid white-tail rabbit,
And the music of his "crying"
As he followed hard upon them
Thrilled me, you must be a huntsman
To conceive my soul's delight.
He would sometimes catch his quarry,

Ofttimes force them in a hollow
Tree or log upon the ground;
If I could not with my hatchet
Cut the game from out its hiding,
Then would I resort to "twisting"
With a forked stick I'd cut;
I would home then take the trophy
Proud as any Hiawatha.

He was like unto my shadow,
Went with me in all my rambles
Where I set the hollow "hare-gums"
In the paths along the branches
At the corners of the fences
Where the wily little varmints
Gnawed their "gaps" between the rails,
Often would we have a tussle
When I took them from their prison,
These my long-eared "molly-cottons."

Alas! my Boone and boon companion
Fell a-sick with fatal sickness,
Then alone he to the forest
Went, and it was there I found him

Cold in death, 'twas there I left him
In his happy hunting ground.
As I placed the sods upon him
They were moistened by my weeping.
Just a dog—but none more faithful—
I shall never him forget.

On account of my youth, I was not allowed to carry a gun.

"Cedar Lane," my home, was on a part of the battlefield of the Five-Forks, in Dinwiddie County, Virginia. Guns, bayonets and other war material could be found.

As an infant I lay on the floor of the house while bullets passed through it; the house was used as a hospital by both the Confederates and Federals.

Like many others, we lost everything movable, such as horses, cattle and provisions.

Some Federal soldier gave my mother one of our own hams and a few hardtacks, which was all we had to subsist upon except a few "razor back" hogs and a few chickens that managed to keep out of sight of the army.

## A RETIRING SUMMER GIRL.

(Miss H. B.)

Oh, cruel hour! Oh, horrid fate!
That made me so disconsolate;
The crowded hall, the music gay,
Had not the power to drive away
The feeling that beset me.
Now, would you know the reason why
I lonely walk and naught but sigh,
My very soul bereft of fire?
It is because you did retire
Last night soon after tea.

Yet with the return of another day
My sadness soon was chased away;
The Sun himself in splendor bright
Was even eclipsed by my delight,
The seeing you did make.
Your majestic smile and comely grace
Excelled in loftiness the place;*

* Mountain Lake, Virginia.

But, alas! an arrival did beguile
From me the pleasure of your smile,
And I my leave must take.

Oh, cruel hour! Oh, horrid fate!
That makes me so disconsolate;
No crowded hall, no music gay,
Nor nothing else can drive away
This feeling that besets me.
Now, would you know the reason why
I lonely walk and naught but sigh,
My very soul bereft of fire?
It is because you did retire
Your humble servant—see?

## REPLY TO "A RETIRING SUMMER GIRL."

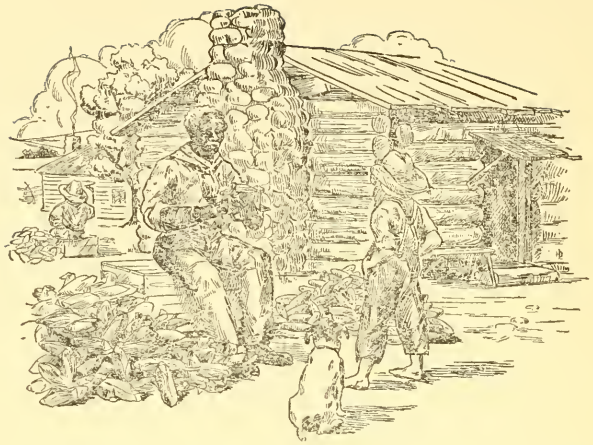
(Written by Miss H. B.)

And why, my Sterling friend, were you
The first to bid the Lake adieu?
You left the merry crowd less gay
Because you chose to go away.

And when I came to breakfast late
And found the rebus on my plate,
It gave my heart a thrill of pain
For one I ne'er should see again.

And yet I smiled to see the boy
And sterling friend (without alloy),
For then I knew your heart was light
The while you vanished from my sight.

Mountain Lake.



I am goin' back to the country, an' goin' back there to stay,
It must have been ole Satan that a-conjured me away,
When the last day comes, an' Gabriel blows his horn
I want to rise an' answer where I used to shuck the corn.

## A CORN-SHUCKING MEMORY.

(To the memory of Joe Bland, my grandfather's slave.)

'Twas at a big corn shuckin' that I heard this little song,
It has been a-ringin' in my head these many years long,

I thought 'twas awful foolish then, but now I've come
to know
'Twas just as true as gospel an' every word was so.

Chorus.

"I had a little wife an' couldn't please her,
I gave her everything that she need,
Everything that she need was just a teaser,
'Cause she wanted everything that she seed"

I was a little nigger then, heart-whole an' fancy free,
Didn't know the song was speakin' such a pow'ful
truth to me,
'Till I married a likely yallow gal, to town we went to
live,
She got to pesterin' me for mo', no matter what I give.

Of all the big fool niggers that draws the breath o' life
The biggest is the one who takes a hiferlutin' wife,
An' goes to town a-thinkin' he can get into the push,
For downright on'ry fool he takes the rag from off the
bush.

I am goin' back to the country, an' goin' back there to stay,
It must have been ole Satan that a-conjured me away,
When the last day comes, an' Gabriel blows his horn
I want to rise an' answer where I used to shuck the corn.

Copyrighted 1908. Set to music, but not published.

## HOW CAN I FORGET HER? (Miss B.)

'Twas at a dance I met her,
Oh, how can I forget her?
So charming, so bewitching and so sweet,
I made her my best bow,
Did all that I knew how
To perpetuate with her this pleasant meet.

Since then I've seen her often
And my heart it grew to soften
Towards this ideal girl and her alone,
When I asked did she forget
The time when first we met,
Said yes, in a calm, indifferent tone.

I abruptly said good-night,
And in this saddened plight
Wandered aimlessly as one who's in a trance,
At last I reached my home
And sat for hours alone
Thinking o'er the wasted efforts at that dance.

As I tossed upon my pillow
Just like some angry billow
Which carries along destruction, death and woe,
My brain all in a whirl
About this ideal girl;
Oh, how can I forget her—never—no!

## TO MISS W.

Charleston, S. C.

Oh, unsolved problem, no genius can
The ways of woman understand;
There's one of whom with one consent
Was said to have no sentiment;
Great metamorphosis, I start,
To find that she is now all HART.

## THE 'POSSUM AND THE BEAR.

The 'Possum come, the Bear has gone,
  The 'Possum has the day;
The Bear he said it was his will,
  And chased himself away;
Then to the jungle he did go
  De-e-lighted to his fill;
We hope he'll have a safe return
  And be de-e-lighted still.

Written soon after Mr. Taft had attended the 'Possum Dinner, and Mr. Roosevelt had gone to the jungles of Africa to hunt.

## LINES TO MISS BUDD.

I've prayed to, entreated and courted the Muse
To inspire me once more and my mind to enthuse
That I may be able to freely indite
Some lines in reply to your poetical flight.
But, alas, my efforts have all been in vain,
For the Muse only visits me with her disdain.

Thus forsaken I wandered from mountains to sea
In search of some power that would cause me to be
Inspired, if but partly, that I might thus show
That "Barkis is willin'," but find it's no go;
The poetical mill, for me grinds not at all,
Which leaves me as poet exceedingly small.

In great desperation of the Muse I demanded
The reason she left me so terribly stranded,
Said "all of my power have I given to one
Who thus will outshine the bright noonday sun;
Of the poetical river, you are the mud,
Its bright, sparkling water is charming Miss
Budd."

## THE ANTI-KISSING CRUSADE.

Here comes a new departure from the W. C. T. U.,
To inaugurate a war against our kissing;
Now this is just outrageous, is a pretty howdy-do,
Should be greeted with the most emphatic hissing.
What! Stop this osculation that's handed down to us,
Time-honored, soul-inspiring, divinely taught?
Amend the proposition, reserve the fight and fuss
For the fellow when he happens to be caught.

## TO KATHERINE.

What Katherine gets within her head
  Is always there to stay,
Like Medes and Persians, what she wills
  Must only be that way;
Yet, when she gets within her pate,
  Or, I should say, her tresses,
A little matter such as dust
  Her sovereign will digresses;
She then will lave and comb and brush
  To change her head's condition,
And do it too in spite of all
  On earth or in perdition.
  *  *  *  *  *
A real Mede and Persian she
  I glory in the part,
So constant and infixible
  Her true and loving heart.

A lady on washing her hair on a cold, damp day.

## TO MISS KEMPER M——.

Referring to our talk of a few days ago,
I made you a promise, and now I will show
That I was in earnest, altho' somewhat late,
In doing what I said, I hope that my fate
Will not be to vex you, or ruffle your temper,
For that wouldn't become my dear "sister Kemper."

The gift that I send you, as you'll see at a glance,
Is not one of beauty, but then the dance
Must answer for that, I hope you'll not frown
Upon this result of the floors in your town;
Altho' it's inanimate with reverence I hold
That those village dances nearly cost it its sole.

In conclusion, I'll say not all of the blame
Should be charged to the dance or floors, for it
came
To Burkeville for far a much greater attraction
Beside which all others are just mites or a fraction;
So take it and keep it, 'twas **you**, only **you**,
That caused it to be **Preston's cast-off old shoe.**

A worn-out dancing slipper sent Miss M. as a reminder of Preston B.

## ALL A-BOARD.

(Administrative Board.)

"All aboard!" is shouted. We're now going to ride,
The engineman 's at the throttle, and the fireman's by
his side;
The flagman 's in position, with his signals close at
hand,
And the porter stands ready as the captain's handy
man.
To make the journey safely, will largely depend
On the chief car inspector's ability and men.
Should on this excursion disaster befall,
Use Balm of Referendum by Dr. Recall.

A new Administrative Board of five members just taking up their duties, and compared with a train's crew of five.

## "TEDDY."

No use to ask who 's "Teddy," for you know
Where you find him there you also find the show,
With the great or with the humble,
Or with varmints in the jungle,
They do always to him tumble,
Don't you know!

He is lynx-eyed and can see all things, you know.
Talks the language of the tropics or the snow,
There is nothing he can't pick up,
No hookworm in his make-up,
And he never had a hiccup,
Don't you know!

He totes about a big stick, don't you know;
He can walk a mile a minute, even so,
And when it comes to fighting,
Or a little stunt at writing,
Why, at each he goes a-kiting,
Don't you know!

He's a-coming from the big hunt, don't you know,
With his trophies from the regions high and low,
Oh, that he'd stop his slaying,
Some are hoping, some are praying,
But watch him do some flaying,
Don't you know!

So come along, our Teddy,* come along,
We 'll meet you and we 'll greet you with a song;
We are waiting, we are ready,
For our only, only Teddy,
Who is sturdy, strong and steady,
Don't you know!

* Mr. R., on his return from his African hunt.

## THE SUFFRAGETTE.

Lee's birthday—and what do we behold!
Virginia's statehouse crowded, overflowing, bless your soul;
The "gentler sex" pleading the right of vote to get,
"Marse Robert" might not know them by the name of suffragette.
But the times have changed, "everlooted," so they say,
And they must be more manly than they were in his day;
They 'll get their equal rights and all things else beside,
For they are marching onward and are riding now astride;
Some day we 'll call them uncle and papa, too, you bet,
There will be no limitation to the blooming suffragette.

Written January 21, 1912.—Lee's Birthday.

## THESE BILLS.

When into the world we come,
Bills;
When we go, and life is done—
Bills;
They poke them to us at the door,
And thro' the mails they come galore,
And they make us very sore,
Bills.

If Mr. Bryan we elect—
A Bill;
If Mr. Taft we should select—
A Bill;
It is very evident
That on Bills our minds are bent,
Even our next President—
A Bill.

## MRS. CARRIE NATION.

She has no great big ugly stick to coax to subjugation
Those who kick against the pricks of proper regulation;
Another weapon she can wield, and with it beat creation,
It has the "big stick" skinned to death, which is no fabrication;
Tobacco fiends, as well as soaks, lookout, or you will catch it,
So peel your eye, and be prepared to dodge her little hatchet.

## A NON-THRILLING KISS.

She was tall, handsome, graceful—an angel minus
wings,
Was perfection just so far as he had traced,
She was dearer than a sister
Until he went and kissed her;
She thrilled not, and his love became effaced.

Said she, "You horrid man,
I can this no longer stand;
You kissed me; it was much against my will; (?)
In a way I did my best;
You should have done the rest,
And then you could have had your little thrill."

"You say your race is run,
You'll face the setting sun*
Then go, I'm as mad as I can be;
When you kiss another girl
I hope she 'll thro' you whirl
A thrill of deadly electricity."

*Went to live in the far West.

## TEMPER.

Temper, we may have in a great or less degree,
We can check or give it rein, just as the case may be;
Then by God's grace subdue it, and you will be blest,
An unbridled temper truly can cause so much unrest.

May 31, 1909.

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## SUCCESS.

Nothing succeeds like success
One ofttimes hears and true,
But what must be the first success,
What first thing must one do?
Make riches, fame, or just a name
To stand you where you be,
Yes, these are well, yes, to be sure,
But, think a while and see
If 'tis not best to start close by
To make your first success,
And conquer self, thy master be,
Let it be nothing less.

June 10, 1909.

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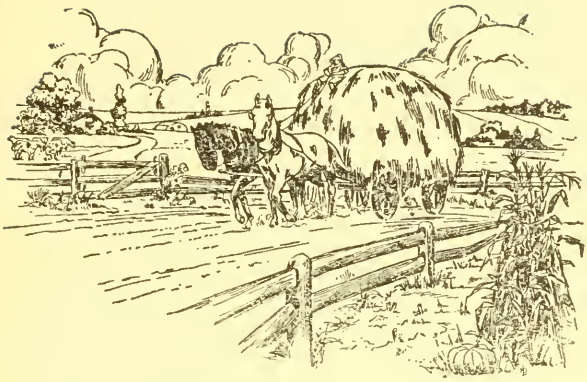

The season of harvest, the season of plenty.

## AUTUMN.

Say not that Autumn is the year's saddest season
  If flowers do then wither and leaves fall and die;
Show they not in passing their greatest perfection
  In fragrance and brightness, then why should we
    sigh?
So peacefully falling, so gently returning
To mother-earth's bosom with nothing of strife.
In glory the living, twice glory the parting,
  Grand glory the ending—a well-spent life.

The season of harvest, the season of plenty,
The season of rest from the toil and the fray,
The crown of our making, is ours for the taking,
What crown have we made for the blest Autumn day?
If we have been like them in Spring-time and Summer
Shed fragrance, made happier our fellow-man's heart,
And thus leave behind us so pleasant a mem'ry,
Grand glory the ending when we come to part.

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Published in booklet form in 1909

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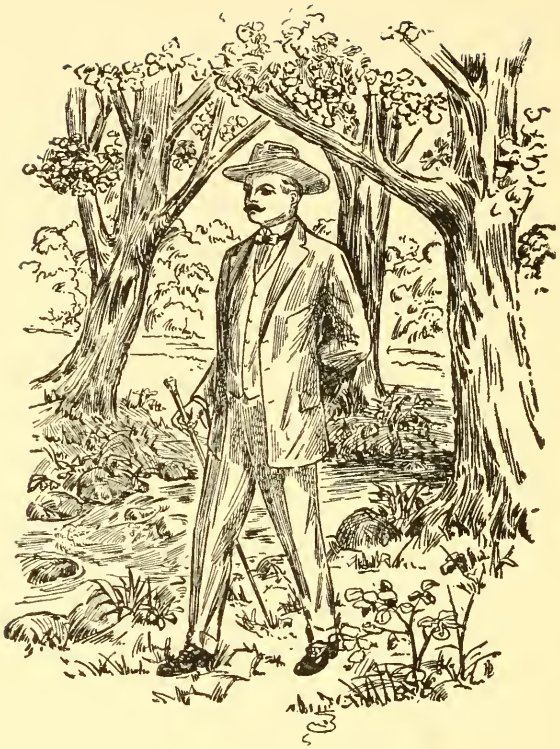
TO THE LOVING MEMORY OF MY
FATHER AND MOTHER
THESE LINES ARE DEDICATED

## SCENES OF CHILDHOOD.

Can you tell me with what feelings
You walk midst scenes of childhood,
Be they grand or unpretentious;
In the hills or on the lowlands;
Have you left their hallowed precincts,
Cast your lot in other places,
After years of absentation,
Wend your footsteps back among them?

Whate'er be your disposition,
Practical or sentimental,
Whate'er in life be your station,
High or lowly, rich or poor,
Here we meet as common brothers
In our hearts a common feeling
Beat our hearts a common beating,
When amidst the scenes of home.

Many places ne'er forgotten
Here in Nature's lavish store,

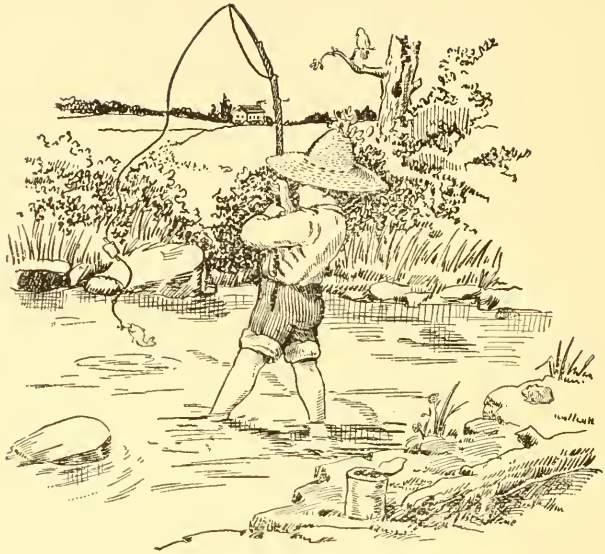


Many places ne'er forgotten
Here in Nature's lavish store,
Well it is to go among them
With our sacred meditations.

Well it is to go among them
With our sacred meditations
Undisturbed by din of traffic
In the marts of man's creation,
Here to hold our sweet communion
In the court of Nature's Temple.

Here you see the gate or hedgeway,
Or, perhaps, it be a line-tree
On whose trunk are telling gashes
Saying in surveyor's language
That the home-place of your childhood
Is divided from your neighbor's;
Often have you passed this landmark
'Mid the hallowed scenes of home.

As you go through fields and woodland
What a train of thoughts beset you,
Thoughts of gladness, thoughts of sadness,
As you tread familiar ground;
Yet, there are so many changes,
That the outer eye perceiveth
But, the changes that are greatest
Are the ones now lost to view.

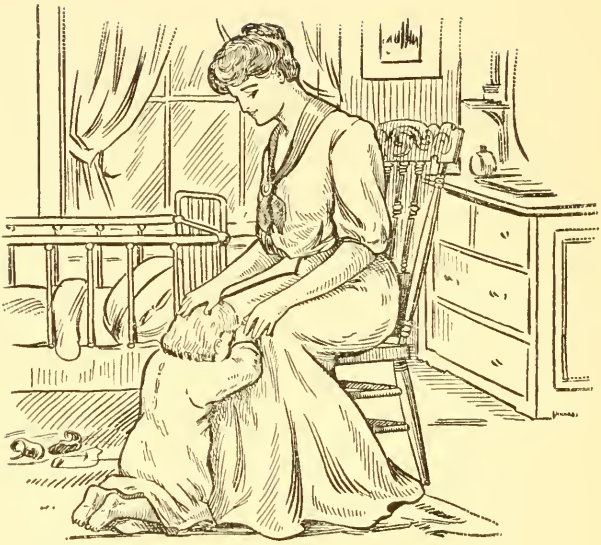


Here the winding, rippling brooklet,
Teeming with its little minnows,
Where you fished with just a pin-hook,
Crooked pole and line of thread;

Here the winding, ripping brooklet,
Teeming with its little minnows,
Where you fished with just a pin-hook,
Crooked pole and line of thread;
Every path and nook and corner
Brings to you some recollection
Of the happy days of childhood,
Happy days of long ago.

If among the scenes of childhood
You perchance may go no more,
You can visit them in spirit
And be all the better for it,
Wander thus among old places,
Think of dear, departed faces,
Yes, you'll be the better for it
Going o'er the scenes of home.

Here the room within the home-place
Where you first saw light of day,
Where you lisped the childish prayers,
Bending o'er your mother's knee;
Watchful eyes did here behold you,
Loving arms did here enfold you;



Here the room within the home-place
Where you first saw light of day,
Where you lisped the childish prayers,
*  *  *  *  *  *
"Now I lay me down to sleep."

Here you learned the sweet petition,
"Now I lay me down to sleep."

And of those whose names you wafted
To the throne of heavenly grace,
Some are scattered, some departed,
To their last, long resting place;
Draw the curtain closely 'round you
In this blessed holy chamber
Holding sacred deep communion
In this place akin to Heaven.

JUL 2 1918

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